



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to Belarus on US Sanctions on Belneftekhim

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman.

On November 13th, the United States Treasury Department, in close consultation with the United States State Department, froze the assets of Belneftekhim and its US representative office, Belneftekhim USA. Belneftekhim, which produces petrochemical products, is the largest enterprise in Belarus and is the largest exporter of Belarusian products to the United States.

This step was taken pursuant to Executive Order 13405, issued on June 19, 2006, which targets persons who undermine Belarus' democratic processes or engage in political repression or public corruption. Sixteen senior officials, including Belarus' leader, Aleksandr Lukashenko, have already been designated under the order. Lukashenko's control over Belneftekhim is the basis for its designation.

The United States government will continue to monitor and take actions against Belarus officials who are responsible for human rights abuses, assaults on democracy, and state corruption, which have been used to preserve their hold on power.

We reiterate our support for the democratic aspirations of the Belarusian people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.